

A
SERMON

Preached at the
Triennial Visitation
OF THE
Right Reverend FATHER in GOD,
SETH,
Lord Bishop
OF
SARUM,

Held at Reading, Sept. 6. 1683.

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L O N D O N,
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21 MAY 1942

Continued from page 1

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the war.

2. The second part of the report deals with the specific details of the situation in the various regions.

TO THE
Right Reverend FATHER in GOD,
SETH,
Lord Bishop
OF
SARUM.

My Lord,

I Had not ventured to expose this Discourse in the way I now do, but for your Lordships Encouragement of it; and, under such Patronage, I shall have the less Apprehensions of those People, who may find themselves too much concerned in the Case, to be any thing pleased with a Subject of this nature: However it may affect them, I have still the Satisfaction of having indeavoured, as well as I could, the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*Explaining and Vindicating a Text very difficult,
and liable to be turned to very ill Constructions:
And if it any way serves to confirm the Friends of
our Church, or to rectifie those who are in lower
Degrees of Prejudice against it, it is as much as
can be hoped by*

My Lord,

Your Lordships most Obedient,

Most Faithful,

and most Humble Servant,

John Barrow.

PHILIP. I. 15, 16, 17, 18.

*Some indeed preach Christ even of Envy and Strife,
and some also of Good-will :*

*The one preach Christ of Contention, not Sincerely ;
supposing to add Affliction to my Bonds :*

*But the other of Love, knowing that I am set for
the Defence of the Gospel :*

*What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether
in Pretence, or in Truth, Christ is preached ;
and I therein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce.*

AMong the other Texts which have been so ill used by those that maintain the Divisions of our Church, there is none more likely to be urged in the behalf of the Dissenting Preachers, nor any with greater appearance of strength than That I have now read. For, granting us all, we may possibly think we have Cause to believe, tho' they

they never will, that such Pastors as they, are unsent and unqualified, all the ill and contentious Preachers in the World; Yet, since they preach Christ, they may press us still, that we ought to be so far from Discouraging of them, that, after the Example of St. Paul in the Text, we ought to Rejoyce that the Doctrine of Christ is any way preached. And how can such Rejoycing consist with the usual Prosecution of them? Or, if We thus prosecute, or otherwise think fit to appear against them, how little do we shew of the meek and Heavenly Temper of St. Paul, whose Successors we would yet pretend our selves to be? Nay farther, they may not be wanting to tell us, that if we do not Rejoyce in their assisting us, it is We that envy the Success of the Gospel, and must be content to take the worst Character in the Text to our selves.

For the satisfying which Plea, I shall take the whole Force of it into Consideration in the following Discourse; and the better to do it, shall propose three Inquiries:

I. Who those were, of whom St. Paul here pronounces, That they preached Christ out of Strife and Contention?

II. How

II: How far we are to understand he rejoiced in *their Preaching*?

III. Whether the Case of the Contentious Preachers in the Text, and those of our Times, be so much the *same*, that the Governours of our Church, should, by Virtue of this Place, or *St. Paul's Example* in it, be so obliged to *Rejoyce* in their Ministry, as not to endeavour the *Suppressing* of it?

And if, in managing these, any Right be done to the Sense of the Words, and the present Methods of the Government with respect to these Men, I shall hope it may be thought not altogether improper in this Assembly, since 'twill be the impleading of Preachers before Preachers; of those that say they can understand, and teach Christianity, before those that do, and *rightfully* do it.

We shall, First, then inquire, who Those I.
were of whom *St. Paul* here pronounces, That they preached *Christ of Strife and Contention*? The resolving of which, will very much depend upon our determining, whether they were Jews remaining still *Juch*, or Judaizing *Christians*, or some other Christian Converts,

verts, of which he was now speaking?

In Loc. The Learned Grotius, who would have the Jews here meant, gives this Account of them: *That to put a stop to the Doctrine of Christianity, they every where rumoured of what sort it was, by what Arguments supported; That so the greater Recourse might be had to St. Paul, to know the whole of the matter from Himself: And all such Resort, in the Place and Circumstances that He now was, they knew would be dangerous, and might wish Fatal to him. Which is, indeed, a very full account of the Strife and Contention with which they were acted. But, with all Submission, does not seem so fairly to answer for what the Apostle mentions no less than three times in the Text, Their preaching of Christ: For their spiteful Noising what the Christian Sect held, cannot be called, but very abusively, a Preaching of Christ. Besides that he opposes them in this very place, to Those that preached Christ out of Truth and Good Will. From which it should seem, that the Gospel on both Hands was fervently preached, and the difference only, that it was not done from the same pious Principle. In short, that they were not Unbelieving Jews, I am farther confirmed from the Verse immediately foregoing, where*
St.

St. Paul tells us, *Many Brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my Bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without Fear; And then it follows, Some indeed preach Christ even of Envy and Strife: It is evident therefore that they were Brethren, of the Family of Christ, tho none of the greatest Sincerity among them.*

If next, it be said, They were Judaizing Brethren, and under these we must comprehend the *Gnosticks*, 'twill be hard to say with any Propriety, that they *preached Christ*; for they preached *Christ and Moses*, and the latter, Doctrines very distant from either. And if farther it be urged, that supposing they did so, the Apostle might rejoyce that they preached Christ any ways, since 'twas better that the Gentiles who lived in gross Idolatry, should have *some knowledg of Christ, tho with mixtures*, than know *nothing* at all of him: 'Twill be plausibly said, but not on a sudden so easy to reconcile this Apostles Rejoycing in such sort of Preachers, with the repeated Cautions he gives against these very Men, and with the plainest Reference to them, *Beware of Dogs, Beware of Evil Workers, Beware of the Concision*: At the third Chapter of this very Epist. v. 2.

Pressed therefore with these Difficulties, I shall rather conceive this Place neither refers to the Unconverted Jews, nor Judaizing Christians, nor, among those, to the Gnostick Teachers; But to such as indeed preached pure Christianity, tho' from no pure Mind: Preaching Christ, but out of Strife; with Design to create Strife and Division in the Church, such as was when one said, *I am of Paul, another of*
 1 Cor. 1. *Apollos, and another of Cephas; And out of*
 12. *Envy; Envyng this great Apostle of Christ, the Glory of his Success; And out of Contenti-*
on; Contending with him for the number of
Profelytes: By this means, supposing to add Af-
liction to his Bonds; supposing, because Vain-
glorious Themselves, that he might be of a
Temper like theirs, and so grieved and af-
licted to be rivalled in Fame, and to be out-
vyed in the multitude of Converts.

And those Preachers, tho' still Christians, who could go thus far in Envy, may not ill be supposed to advance to such a Height of *That*, and of Contention, as to wish St. Paul was taken out of their way; For one Vice admitted is not only an Inlet to another, but a greater; and from hence, to his Bonds they might de-
 fire

fire the Addition of more, and of worse, and even of the last of all temporal Afflictions. So that when we departed from the excellent *Grotius*, it was not so much for assigning a *Wrong Cause* (for they certainly were bad Friends of the Apostles) as for his pitching upon the *wrong Men* ; The Unbelieving Jews, when the Context is so plain, They were *Brethren in the Lord*.

Having therefore considered who these Preachers might most probably be,

We come 2^{ly}. to inquire, How far we are II.
to understand the Apostle here rejoiced in *their* Preaching.

In proposing of which, I cannot forbear observing, by the way, that those who may urge this Passage for the countenancing the disorderly Preachers abroad in our days, will never be able to make it appear, that it *solely* refers to the Subject of Preaching, which yet this Plea supposes it to do. For, if they make a Comment from the Verses preceding, to the Sense we have heard, and press that the Apostle more than once rejoiced that Christ was preached in any sort whatever, and that there-

fore those that succeed him should be of the like mind: I think I may with great safety tell them, That at least some part of this *Rejoycing* relates to a matter of a quite different Consideration: *I rejoyce*, says the Apostle, *yea, and will rejoyce*. For, as he adds in the very next words, *I know that this shall turn to my Salvation, through your Prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*. So that, 'tis plain, some share of his Rejoycing is to be given to the Blessed Hopes and Assurance he had, that his patient bearing the Malice of these Enemies, would at length redound to the Augmentation of his Glory and Happiness. If therefore they press us with what went before, by way of Abatement, we might take in what follows; which they must allow to be no unfair way of Interpretation, unless they will incur the Censure of St. Chrysostome, who observes in his time some Men perverted this very Text, *Not understanding what preceded, or what followed*.

De Pro-
fect.
Evarg.

But omitting this, and to answer more directly how far the Apostle rejoyced in the Preachers he was now speaking of, it may not be amiss to consider, what the Success of their preaching Christ *Eventually* proved: And what the *Real and True Purpose* was, from which they

they took this Office upon them. *Accidentally* it proved the means of propagating the Knowledge of the Gospel ; and 'twas very consistent with the Piety of St. Paul to rejoyce, that, since himself *now in Bonds* could not do it, others were industrious to diffuse the Doctrine of his Saviour in the World : Which still might be, without his being satisfied with the Motives of their Diligence, in which he could no more express a Complacencie, than he would have done in *Strife, or Envy, or Contention* it self. *However*, says he, *whether in Pretence, or in Truth, Christ is Preached* ; Whether by Occasion, as *περσφάσει* signifies, by *Accident* only ; Or *whether by Truth*, from the *true Design* of those that undertake it, the Gospel was declared : And in this *He rejoyced, yea, and would rejoyce* ; Not that they preached from any ill Inducement : But that by this means, the Providence of God, bringing Good out of Evil, great numbers were brought to the Knowledge of Christ, who were before in Ignorance of Him.

From whence we now proceed in the third III.
place to inquire, Whether the Case of the Contentious Preachers in the Text, and Those of our Times, be so much the *same*, that the Gover-

Governours of our Church should by Virtue of this *Passage*, or *St. Paul's Example* in it, be so obliged to *Rejoyce* in their Ministry, as not to indeavour the *Suppressing* of it?

To which I answer;

1. That it would be remembred, There is nothing in this *Passage* that is any *Approbation* of such sort of Preachers, as those the Apostle had occasion here to mention.

All that he does, and it is indeed with great Gentleness he does it, is, to take Notice that there were some of the Christian Name who preached Christ of *Envy and Strife*; and not from the *true and sincere* Intention which was to have bin so much wished among them: But this, however, is very far from a *Commendation* of them. *He does not, says Erasmus, encourage that any should preach Christ unsincerely, but out of things that were not well done, collects what was best; and contemns their Personal Hatred to himself, so long as it any ways promoted the Gospel.* And how calmly soever the Apostle here reflects upon such sort of Preachers, it is manifest in the very next Chapter; He exhorts the Philippians, *That nothing be done by them out of Strife*

In Loc.

v. 3.

Strife and Vainglory, which are the very Things, for which these Men are particularly mark'd. If therefore our Dissenters shall think fit to tell the Governours of the Church, They ought, with *St. Paul*; to rejoyce in their Success; they may withal consider, *St. Paul* exprestes little *Likeing* to the Men, or the Principles upon which they set Themselves to work: And from his Example they can, consequently, build little Kindness to Themselves; which notwithstanding is that they are most supposed to mean. But

2. Were this Passage allowed to be a Temporary *Forbearance* of such Un sincere Preachers, yet 'tis no *Direction* to the People to hear them.

'Tis observable to this Purpose, that those to whom the Apostle here writes, were no Hearers of such Preachers, but of *St. Paul*, and of those that, like Himself, preached Christ out of Truth; being planted under *Bishops*, as appears by v. 1. Not that there were more Bishops than one in *Philippi* it self, but that there were more in the Territories of this Metropolis. And those under their Charge are advised, and directed in this very Chapter, as much as the most fervent Prayers in the Case could be instructive to them, *That their Love might abound yet more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgment; that*

that they might approve things that are excellent ; that they might be sincere, (which it is evident those Preachers were not) and without Offence, till the day of Christ, at 9, and 10. vers. That they would stand fast in one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by their Adversaries, at 17, and 28. vers. And more particularly, he commends them in Chap. 2. As those who had always obeyed, not as in his Presence only, but now much more in his Absence, v. 12. So that here are Prayers that they might, and Commendations that they did stand fast in the Doctrine he had planted among them, or of those that himself had appointed in his Absence; But not one word to recommend this other kind of Preachers to the Hearing of his Converts. He only tells them, such Preachers were gone abroad in the World; And safely he might tell them, as those that were not likely to be drawn aside, either from himself, or those that preached the Gospel out of Good Will, and from unfeigned Sincerity. But it must be a very odd Deduction from this, if the Dissenting Preachers among us, will from hence conclude, That our Rulers are obliged to let the World run after them, from St. Paul's Example of Not giving the People the least hint in the World to be Followers of such Preachers.

3. 'Twould

3. 'T would be farther added, that a great Difference is to be put between preaching the Gospel, from what Principle soever, to a People Unconverted, and gathering a Church from out of a Church already rightly settled. That those who here preached Christ of Envy and Strife, did not so much intermeddle with Persons Converted before, as indeavour to make new Converts to the Doctrine of the Gospel, seems very clear and evident from the Contentious end of their Preaching, which was to add, as the Apostle here tells us, Affliction to his Bonds. They very well knew, as St. Chrysostom observes, that *ubi su-* he was already obnoxious to Nero for publishing a *pra.* Doctrine so contrary to his Vices; and therefore they preached the same Doctrine St. Paul did, that so this Persecutor hearing from his Enemies the vast Progress of it, might be the more exasperated against him.

But thus to exasperate him, their readiest way was, not so much to confirm the Disciples this Apostle had made, as to add more to them; and by winning over as many as they could, both of Jews and Gentiles, to spread the Gospel of our Saviour the more, that the Adversaries of it, might the easier be induced to

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the

the utmost Rage and Severity against him, as being esteemed the Head of the Party. But, all this while, they taught those who had not learned before the Gospel of Christ; which cannot be the Case of the *bold and Contentious* Preachers of our Times. They do not pretend to teach a People already untaught, or to carry the Gospel where 'twas never heard; but obtrude themselves upon those that were before instructed in the Faith, set up a Church within a Church already committed to the Care of *Lawful and Competent* Guides; And thus putting their Sickle into other mens Harvest, they have so little share in *St. Paul's* Rejoycing, that they have his own Practice expressly against them, So have I strived, says he, to preach the Gospel, Not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another Mans Foundation. But as it is written, to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see, and they that have not heard, shall understand.

Rom. 15.
20. 21.

4. And lastly, it would farther be observed, that a vast Difference is to be made between preaching Christ from Contention, or Envy to a Particular Person, and preaching up a general Contention, in the Name of Christ.

It has already bin mentioned that those here took notice of, were such as preached the Gospel out of Envy to St. Paul; such as looked with a very ill Eye upon the glorious Success of his Ministry, and therefore out of Emulation and Strife contended with him for the number of Disciples, and the multiplying those, they supposed, but vainly, might add Grief of Mind to his Bodily Confinement; might add new Grievs, and fresh Dangers to him from his Enemies at Rome, where he was now set for the Defence of the Gospel, or for his having defended and maintained it.

A Design in those that carried it on, widely different from the very Spirit of Christianity; But yet they preached Christianity still, for, 'twas Christ whom they preached; and when it is said, they did it not of Truth and Sincerity, it does not refer to the Matter of their Doctrine, as if they taught what was false and unsound; but to their Intention, which was not so truly to advance the Knowledge of Christ in the World, as to grieve this Blessed Apostle, and to create him more Hardships and ill Usage.

He does not, says the Father before mention-
 ed, and after him (*a*) *Theophylact*, and both
a In Loc. b Adverf. Marcion. lib. 5. cir. ca finem. c ad Ju- baianum Ep. 73. vid. Fir- mil. ad Cypr. Ep. 75. confirmed by (*b*) *Tertullian*, and (*c*) *St. Cypri- an*, where it falls in their way to confider this
 place; He does not speak of such who taught He-
 retical Doctrines, but of those who rightly taught
 Christ, but did; from no right Purpose of Mind.
 So that whatever the Motives were to them-
 selves of undertaking the Ministry, it appears,
 what they taught was no other than Orthodox,

But as for our present Contentious Preach-
 ers, 'twill be difficult for them to make it ap-
 pear that they preach the Truth as it is in Christ
Jesus. 'Twill be hard for them to show that
 they do not preach up a National Contention
 in the Name of Christ, which was more than
 these did. Why else do we hear from them
 so many Doctrines, tending not only to lessen,
 but destroy the very Being and Authority of
 that Church, which is established upon the
Foundation of Prophets and Apostles! Why else do
 we hear from them so many Positions, de-
 structive of Monarchy, and so dangerous to
 Kings, for whom this very Apostle exhorts us,
 especially to make Supplications, and Prayers, and
 Thanksgivings? And if thus they preach ano-
 ther Gospel than his, whatever Favour this
 Passage

Passage may afford them, I do not know how it can relieve them from *Another* wherein the same Mouth pronounces, *That thô he, or an Angel from Heaven should preach any other Gospel, than what he had preached, let him be accursed.* Gal. 1.8.

If therefore, upon the whole, the Preachers now such, in defiance of the Laws, instead of carrying on a *Personal* Contention, promote, and have effectually promoted, a most Dangerous, and most *Universal* Disturbance; I cannot but conceive, the Difference is so wide between those the Apostle refers to in this place, and those we meet with in the present Age, that if our Governours, as the Government has ever been kind to its cost, should still think it safe and prudent to forbear the suppressing of them; it is *more* than these Men can reasonably expect from any thing this Text can oblige them to do.

And this being done, I shall now think of closing the whole, with such Reflections upon what has been said, as may either concern

I. The dissenting Preachers, or

II. Our selves of this Clergy, or

III. The

III. The People that are Hearers of Them,
or of Us. And

- I. To the dissenting Preachers I would from hence, with all tenderness, recommend, their impartial Considering the great Evil of preaching Christ, if they should truly preach him, from *Strife and Contention*, and from *unsincere Ends*.

If they say they have considered this already, and do not take themselves to be concerned in it; I would pray them, as *Cassius*, to resolve us, whether, supposing a *third sort* of Men should begin a Separation in the Church, without any *just Cause*; afterwards, refuse all *reasonable Terms of Accommodation*; and farther, take all the Courses they could think of to *perpetuate the Difference*; they would not believe they were something influenced by a *Spirit of Contention*?

They must thus pronounce, if they think there are such things as *Contention*, or *Strife* in the World; and if they do so, at the very same time, they pronounce against themselves.

For,

For, that they began the Breach without any just Cause, there can nothing be more evident than their separating from us, not as we did from Rome, from the ever justifiable Cause of its having corrupted the Substantials of Religion; But for Things, in their own Nature, Harmless and Indifferent; For the sake of things, which they never did, and never will be able to oppose, but by so many Cavils as will argue more plainly a Desire of Contention, than any just Exception they have to them.

That they refuse all reasonable Terms of Accommodation, they have put beyond all Question since the little fruit of all Conferences held with them, and the absolute Stiffness with which they insist to this very day, that the Government should yield all to them, without any due Compliance on their Parts.

And that they endeavour to perpetuate the Difference, as much as in them lies, what more convincing Arguments can we have, than their raising new Academies? For by this they do not mean the Controversie shall die with them: What more convincing Arguments can we have, than the Universal Cry of their Leaders,

Leaders, till then never heard of, against the very *Doctrines* of our Church for some time before the *Expiration* of the *Act* for renouncing the *Covenant*? By which, what could they mean, but that this which at first they said to be so great a *Snare* to their *Consciences*, being now taken away, they must either honestly come over to our Church, or start some new *Difference* to keep on foot their *Separation* from it?

But leaving this with them, from a *Contentious*, I am next to pass to an *Un sincere* End of preaching the *Gospel*. And here again, I would calmly ask them, if *themselves* were to assign the marks of *Sincerity* in the serving of *Christ*, whether one would not be, a proposing at first to serve him *aright*, so that men should not *run* before they were *sent*, or serve the God of *Order* in *disorderly* ways? Which yet they must give us leave to fear themselves do, till we have from them a better account, than has hitherto been given, of the *lawfulness* of their *Call* to the *Work* of the *Ministry*.

I would have them ask *themselves*, if they preach so *sincerely* as they pretend, what they mean by their designed and affected clouding the

the *simplicity* of the Gospel with mysterious and set Phrases? Whether they do not justly give occasion to think they have some bad Ends to serve upon their Hearers, when they thus artificially cast a Mist before their Eyes, create Depths where there are none, and obscuring plain Truths, amuse and confound, instead of instructing, or enlightning their Followers?

I would have them ask *themselves*, if they only mean *the Honour and Success of the Gospel of Christ*, why they chuse, so observably, to preach in such Places where there are great Presumptions they may rather consult *their own Profit and Advantage*? Why in *Market-Towns*, in populous and rich Places, but to get more *Profelytes*, that is, more *Benefactors*, rather than in *Finland*, or the *steril parts of Norway*, where Preaching is more *scarce*, and the Maintenance more *low*? For, I cannot imagine but that were their zeal for the Glory of God, the yearning of their Bowels for the Souls of Men, so great as they say, they would give their first Care to the Souls that most need it, and exercise their zeal in a *barren and dry Land*, as well as that which *flows with Milk and with Honey*: And since they don't do this, I know not how to name the Principle that guides them, but

2 Cor.
12. 14.

I am not very sure that it is the Sincerity, from which this Apostle told the *Corinthians*, I seek not yours, but you.

If therefore these amount to *Proofs* of their Contention, and Unsincerity in preaching the Gospel, it is plain they live in two as ill Vices as can belong to any Christian Preachers. If they only amount to so many strong and vehement *Presumptions*, it is yet a mighty scandal they give to Christianity; and if they are the *Ingenious*, the *Knowing* and *Conscientious* Persons they would be taken for, they cannot but consider the Advantages they give by this means to the common *Enemies* of all Religion: Not omitting, that whatever turbulent Practices their *Followers* may be guilty of, are very justly to be charged upon themselves, whose very preaching contrary to Law, first brought the Law in Contempt with their *Hearers*; and if afterwards they run into greater Enormities, it is but Proficiency still in that Contempt of Government, which the *Example*, as well as the *Doctrines* of their Leaders had taught them.

And now, if after all, the dissenting Preachers will shift this from themselves, and say we have taken all along for granted their being
Contenti-

Contentious and Unsincere Preachers, which is more than they think they have reason to acknowledge themselves to have bin, I shall only add, that they cannot, notwithstanding, say this urged improperly to them, *since both they and we agree that the Faulty and the Criminal may be pressed with Considerations suitable to their Case, tho' we are not sure we shall always convince them.*

We pass next to the second general Inference to *our selves*, who have the Honour of being of this Clergy : And under this I would first humbly offer the great Care we ought to take, as at the first Entrance upon our Holy Office, so thro' the whole course of it, to preach the Gospel in *Truth and Sincerity*. For, we see, the best things, eaven the preaching of Christ, is not to be undertaken but from a *Pure and Sincere Mind*. We are therefore not only to deliver what is Truth, but to do it from a *True and Unfeigned Intention* of promoting the Glory of God in the World, and setting forward the Salvation of Men ; in comparison of this despising the other considerations of worldly Advantage, Honour, or Respect ; which yet are due to us for our Work-sake : and much more detesting the Exercise

II.

of so Holy a Function as ours, from the Unholy Ends of *Strife, Vainglory, Envy, or Ambition*. It will be hard to convince Gamblers that we preach the Gospel out of Good will, if we give them cause to think that we only preach it from Good will to *our selves*; and besides the great fitness that a pure Religion should be taught from a pure Principle, there is this Advantage in it, which I shall ever think very Considerable, that when we *sincerely and principally* mean the Glory of God, and good of Souls by it, 'twill be that which will secure us in the course of our Ministry, from those mean *Compliances, those unmanly Arts, and little Condescensions*, which make any Man, for Interest, cheap and contemptible; but of all Men, a *Clergyman* most.

2. From hence I infer, the great Diligence we should use in our several Stations, lest those that preach Christ out of *Strife and Contention* should *out-watch and out-labour* us. If we will not take Care of our Province, we are sensibly convinced that others are ready at hand to invade it; they will tell our Charge, out of *Charity to them*: and tho' we know well enough, 'tis the *Charity of our Charge* they expect again; yet the very *Pretence* would be taken away from

from *them*, the very *Reproach* be taken away from *us*, who ought so well to fill our several Places, as to leave no room for any *Intruder*: But room would be left, and Advantages taken, and the People stray more from us, and our own Sincerity be called into question, if we were remiss in the work of the Ministry; and the Consequence of this, as well as the Guilt of so great a Neglect, are too well known, and I hope so well cautioned, as not to need any farther enlargement, where I now am.

3. From hence I infer, the great reason we our selves have, not to give any Countenance to *Contentious Preachers*, by *Uncanonical Practices*, or *Compliances*. For so much as we recede, in any Point whatever, from the stated Discipline of the Church, so much Encouragement we manifestly give to those who preach in direct Opposition to it. If, to gratify any one, we will administer the Sacrament *sitting*, baptize without *Sureties*, or the *sign* of the Cross, or marry without *Banns* or *Licence*, or on any occasion, wilfully omit the *Prayers* of the Church, it is to do what themselves could wish; and with this further Circumstance, that they have it in their Power to say of us;

we

we our selves as to these things, and the needlessness of them, are of the same Opinion with them: And what is this, but to strengthen their Obstinacy, and, by our own Example, to confirm them in the Contempt of that very Church, the Authority of which we have obliged our selves to preserve?

4. And lastly, From hence I infer, the vast Obligation under which we all are, to avoid *Contention* one with another. For, why should we, who have had both the Honour and Blessing of the same Episcopal Imposition of Hands, have the same great Concern of Souls to advance, and do it by preaching the same Gospel of Peace, why, of all Men, should we have Variance with each other? It is too much occasion of *Contest* our Enemies give us; and with them 'tis a *noble Contention*, because it is a *Contending for the Truth*. But if to the Breaches they make upon us, we will open more of our own Accord, and divide that Force with which we should oppose them; they may in all probability succeed, but it will be little Credit either to our *Courage*, or to our *Integrity*. In two words, could so monstrous a thing be supposed, as that any of our own Body could fly in the Face of their lawful Superiours,

riours, betray the Peace and Settlement of the Church of which they are Members, and Preach, or *Act* out of Envy and Strife; the mildest thing to be said of them is, that the greatest Kindness they can shew to our Church, next to that of publick Retraction and Amendment, would be *publickly* to Renounce it: For the same Reason, that it would be better for the *Obstinate* and *Scandalous* to renounce their *Baptism*, than under the Pretence of it to fall into such Practices as *cause the Name of Christ to be blasphemed.*

From whence, in the last place, I proceed III.
to the Deductions which may concern the People that are either Hearers of the *Contentious Preachers* among us, or of *our selves*. And here I would pray their Permission to mind them.

1. That they would not think the *worse* of Christianity, for the *Farrs* and *Contentions* of the Preachers of it. Indeed, if all who pretend to *teach*, did but truly *follow* this Doctrine, we should hear of *no Divisions*: The sweet and peaceable Genius of it, would either *prevent*, or *cure* Animosities; and Love and Unity would be, *as of old*, its Honourable Badges:
But

But if instead of this, *some* will propagate more of *Contention* than *Christ*; and *we*, as it is our Duty, withstand them, the People from hence, would very ill collect, that Christianity tended to *Variance*, without considering that it lies more in the *Temper* of these Men: They would much worse collect, that because the Preachers of it do not always agree, Christianity it self is *nothing* at the Bottom; For our very differing about the *Superstructure* supposes on all hands the *Foundation* to be Real. They cannot therefore, in reason, admit any Prejudice against Religion for the sake of its *Ministers*; but ought, on the contrary, to discriminate those Ministers who do so much Dis-service to Religion.

2. From hence I would likewise mind them how great Care they ought to take, what Spiritual Guides they commit themselves to. For, if they follow Contentious Preachers, it is very great odds but that they themselves will in a short time be as *perverse* and *contentious* as they; their Nature will be sowed by the Principles of their *Leaders*, and the visible signs of their profiting by their Ministry will be, their being more *Sowr*, and more *Froward* still. So that to the Ease and Innocence of their
Lives,

Lives, it is necessary they consider, who it is that they take for the *Conduct* of them. Not that I mean they are left at large to *chuse*, or to *follow* what Preachers they will; For God, and the Government have determined that for them, and the same Providence which made them Inhabitants of such a Place, has fixed such a one as the Preacher of it, from whom they are not, without the most weighty Causes, to depart: But before they depart from a lawful Ministry, it concerns them to be well satisfied what other Ministry they put themselves under; to try the *Spirits*, and *examin* whether Doctrines, in their natural Consequence, tending to *Strife*, the Subversion, or Disturbance of all Order and good Government, relish more of pure and uncorrupt Christianity, than the quiet Submission to God and to Magistrates, which our Church has ever taught, and which cannot be left, upon any *Exceptions*, for any other Church, against which there will not more, and more just *Exceptions* be readily found.

3. And to conclude, From the whole I infer, the great Obligation upon those of the Laity, whose Office requires it, to use all lawful Means of putting a stop to this sort of Preachers. If they will not, as one would think by

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this time they should, in Conscience *desist* ; I shall think it no hard Conclusion to say, it is you that ought in Conscience, *to suppress them* ; the Places you are in, and the Oaths you have taken, will press you more to it, than I shall now do : I shall only tell you, if they have no Right to the Apostles *Rejoycing*, they have less to your *Favour* ; and if they tell us, this is preaching *Persecution*, 'twill be very difficult for them to prove, that any are *Persecuted* but for *Righteousness* sake ; which can never be their Case, as matters now stand, unless, by a very soft Figure, we will call those the *Schools of Righteousness*, which have so lately, and more than once appeared the *Nurseries of Rebellion*. I would not say this in the manner I do, but that the whole Being of our Church is at Stake, These the Men that boldly undermine it, and you that are set as the *Guardians* of it. All they can have to plead for themselves, your *Ministers*, you need not fear, will be able to answer ; But after all, 'tis you will soonest convince them, I mean, you that are in *Office*, and will faithfully execute it. Which that you may do, and we with like Sincerity perform our Parts, and both so successfully as to secure the Peace of Christ's Church, Let us in the humblest manner beseech the Prince of Peace, and great Bishop of

our Souls, even the Lord Christ Jesus, to whom
with the Father, and the Blessed and Eternal Spi-
rit, be all Honour and Praise, and Might and
Dominion, now and evermore, Amen.

F I N I S.
